

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

261639Z Jun 06

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004407

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [CU](#) [CH](#) [UNESCO](#)

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE BOARD EARLY PREVIEW

1. Summary: Executive Board Secretary Parsuramen met with Ambassador Oliver to review preparations for the 175th Executive Board. Deadline for new agenda items for the 175th Executive Board is 22 July. End summary.

2. Ambassador Oliver met on Thursday, 22 June, with the Secretary of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen. Three issues stood out for our possible action in advance of the 175th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board this fall.

a) Discussion on the Cuban Literacy initiative (septel).

b) In an effort to hear directly from the field, instead of through Secretariat staffers, Ambassador Oliver would appreciate

SIPDIS

Washington's comments and advice on our proposing a "Directors Day" giving an opportunity for a number of UNESCO field office directors to personally brief the Executive Board on their activities during the year, either focusing on Education issues, Water-related issues, or potentially linked with the Thematic debate. (see below).

c) For the moment, no speakers have been selected for the Thematic Debate during the Executive Board. The topic is "UNESCO as a Specialized Agency of the Reforming UN System: Challenges, Roles and Functions at Global, Regional and Country Levels." If Washington has any suggestions or recommendations regarding speakers for a three person panel (debate format) that could participate, Mr. Parsuramen would be grateful to have a wider selection before making any choices with the Chairman of the Executive Board, who will be in Paris next week.

3. On other matters, Mr. Parsuramen said that, clearly, the C/4 and C/5 discussions will be at the heart of the fall Executive Board's work, beginning to set the stage for the next UNESCO General Conference in 2007.

4. Regarding the Medium-Term Strategy proposals, the main recommendations coming from the regional consultations with each geographic group's national commissions will be arriving in Paris shortly, along with comments from various consultations by the Secretariat, the President of the General Conference, and

SIPDIS

discussions with Ambassadors, all to be reviewed, filtered, and coalesced into a 10-15 page preliminary document which will be presented at the next Executive Board. The document will then be reworked and polished for formal presentation to the 176th Executive Board in Spring 2007, and ultimately readied for discussion, debate and decision at the 34th General Conference in fall 2007. The other major work in progress, the major review by the Science Committee will have its major lines communicated orally at the next Executive Board.

5. Other issues that will be at the forefront during the fall Executive Board will, of course, be the reform of the Education Sector, guided by ADG, Peter Smith. The opening of new UNESCO centers in Libya (water) and Venezuela (education), though the Ambassador told Parsuramen that it is important that the need for these centers be fully documented before any serious discussion can be had. Another issue that will surely be raised either formally or informally will be the need to tighten internal procedures regarding the increasingly out of control system of awarding UNESCO prizes.

6. Another issue where both Ambassador Oliver and Mr. Parsuramen were in agreement was the need to find standardized language for Executive Board resolutions. The Ambassador said that using standardized language, negotiated and clearly understood by interested parties, will lessen many of the problems faced in previous Boards.

7. In the same vein, the Ambassador suggested that, as far as possible, any need for changes in language be negotiated informally between the concerned parties before documents are published and distributed by the Secretariat. She noted that once documents have been publicly disseminated, the context of the negotiation changes, often raising discussions to a different and more difficult level before solutions are found.

8. Parsuramen also agreed with the Ambassador that there are costs and benefits in the negotiating process for drafts and resolutions,

where the line between editorial changes and substantive changes are often extremely fine. Ambassador Oliver suggested that, as far as possible, the rule should be to leave the language as is, unless there is a serious problem.

9. Parsuramen went down a long list of issues that will likely be on the agenda. They included: Displaced WWII Cultural Objects, the Cuban feasibility study on the effectiveness of literacy teaching methods, a report from Brazil on the African Intellectual Diaspora, a review of the three organs, updates regarding the Brasilia office, CR Committee issues, fixing a date for the General Conference, Extrabudgetary matters, Headquarters committee, staffing issues, NGO candidatures, cooperation with African organizations, the thematic debate, UN reform, reflection on the future of UNESCO, Items for the next Executive Board, etc.

10. Finally, the Ambassador mentioned that India might raise an issue regarding Executive Board procedures, with the UK and German delegations' musical chairs in mind. She said that currently there is a "feeling of unease" regarding the situation. The fact that rules are not being followed in spirit raises legitimate questions about what it means to be a member of UNESCO, and could lead the organization down a slippery slope.

11. Parsuramen agreed, saying that he is concerned about the precedent it sets, and indicated that he and UNESCO's legal section are actively researching the question. He noted that in New York, while there are delegations that are represented by non-nationals of that country, it would, in his view, be problematic if an Ambassador speaks on behalf of another country.
Oliver